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SL, TZ, ZA
SUBJECT: KOSOVO RECOGNITION LOBBYING: TARGET COUNTRIES IN
AFRICA

REF: STATE 166909

Classified By: Classified by EUR DAS R. DiCarlo; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) This is an action request. See talking points in paragraph 6 and questions and answers in paragraph 7.

12. (SBU) Ambassadors are requested to deliver the following demarche on Kosovo to host governments at the highest possible level. Department appreciates posts' efforts to date and now seeks to let governments that have either previously expressed interest in recognizing Kosovo's independence or appeared sympathetic know that now is the time to act.

13. (C) The objective of this demarche is to:

-- Request host government to recognize Kosovo's independence now.

-- Explain the importance of prompt recognition.

14. (C) BACKGROUND: Washington, in coordination with our European partners, continues to lobby countries to recognize Kosovo as soon as possible. Although Kosovo's pace of recognitions to date has been faster than virtually all other states founded since 1971 (Croatia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, Bangladesh, Eritrea), we seek to maintain momentum around the world and to move several potentially-receptive countries through a targeted demarche. Priority lobbying targets in Africa are: The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Zambia. All ten countries have expressed some support for independence or have appeared sympathetic, but have yet to move forward

with recognition. We expect that recognitions by key countries, including two-thirds of the EU, Japan, South Korea, Canada and several of Kosovo's neighbors, as well as two African states (Burkina Faso and Senegal), can pave the way for more African countries to move forward now.

¶5. (SBU) For the latest update on recognitions, please refer to the S/CRS-EUR/SCE Kosovo portal on SIPRNET, located at: <http://www.state.sgov.gov/s/crs/> (Click Kosovo). For examples of Kosovo's progress, and other cleared press guidance, please refer to the "Special Focus - Kosovo" on InfoCentral at: <https://infocentral.state.gov/home/pd-focus/pd-special-focus/kosovo2>. This and other more in-depth information can be found at the aforementioned Kosovo Portal on SIPRNET.

¶6. (SBU) POINTS FOR USE ON KOSOVO: Department requests that Ambassadors/Charges draw on the following points to underscore the importance to the USG of recognition of Kosovo.

-- Kosovo declared its independence on February 17, in accordance with the recommendations of Martti Ahtisaari, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General, and his comprehensive proposal for the Kosovo status settlement. On February 18, 2008, the United States and several other governments recognized Kosovo as a sovereign and independent state.

-- We urge that your country join the U.S. and the many other countries that already have recognized Kosovo in the two months since its independence and establish diplomatic relations with the Republic of Kosovo. Your government's prompt recognition would help support a smooth transition for Kosovo, bolster regional stability, and promote closure for the conflicts that plagued the Western Balkans in the 1990's.

-- In addition to most European countries and others in Asia and Latin America, Burkina Faso and Senegal have recognized Kosovo. This pace of recognitions has been faster than for virtually all other states founded in the last several decades (e.g. Eritrea, Croatia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, Bangladesh).

-- We acknowledge that Serbia has opposed Kosovo's independence declaration. Nevertheless, Kosovo's existence is a fact, turning back the clock is not possible, and maintaining momentum on recognitions will help avoid a new frozen conflict.

-- The Ahtisaari plan for supervised independence provided the best prospect for international peace and stability in Southeast Europe. Your support to maintain the momentum of recognitions would be significant and timely.

FOR POSTS IN OIC MEMBERS STATES ONLY:

-- The 2008 Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Dakar Summit declaration communiqu  expressed solidarity with the Kosovo people. Afghanistan, Albania, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Turkey have recognized Kosovo while several other OIC members have expressed support and solidarity with Kosovo.

¶7. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (IF ASKED):

Q: WHY IS THE U.S. PUSHING FOR THIS NOW?

-- Resolving Kosovo's status and bringing peace and prosperity to the Balkans region has been a foreign policy priority of the U.S. and the international community for over a decade.

-- Your recognition would send a positive sign of solidarity with the people of Kosovo and southeast Europe -

- of all ethnicities -- who crave normalcy after years of conflict and turmoil. It would also facilitate the country's integration into the international community.

-- Your recognition of Kosovo's independence would also send an important message to Serbia and its people. The sooner Serbia's leaders accept the fact of Kosovo's independence; the sooner Serbian society can concentrate on a positive agenda of political and economic reform, which are the main concerns of Serbia's citizens.

-- Recognition by your country would also assist Kosovo's entry into international financial institutions. Although the 39 countries that have already recognized Kosovo represent a weighted-majority in these institutions, the United States believes it important to increase the number and regional diversity of countries that support economic development for all the people of Kosovo within the IMF and World Bank.

Q: WHAT OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE RECOGNIZED KOSOVO?

-- We have been pleased that a number of countries have moved forward quickly to recognize Kosovo. To date, 39 countries have recognized Kosovo and several others have said they intend to do so. This pace of recognition has been faster than that of other states whose independence was controversial, including Croatia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, Bangladesh and Eritrea. Countries that have recognized to date include: two-thirds of the EU and NATO; 8 of 15 UN Security Council members; all G8 members, except Russia.

Q: IS THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND IN KOSOVO STABLE NOW?

-- We are pleased that the Government of Kosovo has shown maturity, restraint and leadership. Kosovo has seen virtually no inter-ethnic violence and no refugee flows since the declaration of independence. Its multiethnic government and other leaders have reached out to the population and built on the track record of eight years of elected provisional government. They have taken steps to implement the Ahtisaari Plan, particularly its protections for minorities. The Kosovo Government has adopted nineteen Ahtisaari-related laws, including laws on minority protection, and adopted a new constitution that enshrines the Ahtisaari principles.

Q: IS KOSOVO A PRECEDENT FOR OTHER SEPARATIST REGIONS?

-- As we and the many other governments that have recognized Kosovo have emphasized repeatedly, Kosovo's independence does not set a precedent. The history of the Balkans that led to the specific circumstances in which Kosovo found itself is unique and should not be compared to Africa or other regions. Kosovo's struggle must be viewed within the context of the non-consensual and violent break-up of the Yugoslav Federation. Among the factors that make Kosovo special are the policies of ethnic cleansing and other atrocities against civilians in Kosovo, the extended period of international administration of Kosovo that effectively removed any Serbian authority over it, and a U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) that called for a political process designed to determine Kosovo's status.

-- This combination of circumstances makes Kosovo different from conflicts elsewhere.

1Q. DID THE NEGOTIATING PARTIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MAKE ALL EFFORTS POSSIBLE TO REACH A MUTUALLY AGREED SOLUTION?

-- All avenues were explored to the fullest before Kosovo reached the decision to declare independence. President Ahtisaari and others worked intensively for over two years to find a negotiated solution for Kosovo. UNSC Resolution 1244, which called for a political process designed to

determine Kosovo's future status, may have envisioned an agreement between the parties but did not require one. Although Ahtisaari and a subsequent EU-Russia-U.S Troika left no diplomatic stone unturned, the parties could not come to agreement on the question of status.

-- This Ahtisaari process did, however, allow for the development of internal arrangements that would promote a multi-ethnic, democratic Kosovo, strengthen good governance, and provide for active and meaningful participation in public life by all its minority communities. Ahtisaari's plan for supervised independence for Kosovo also promotes and protects the rights of all of Kosovo's ethnic communities, including, in particular, those of Kosovo Serbs. Most states in the European region, including neighbors of Kosovo other than Serbia, and the majority of UNSC members endorsed the Ahtisaari Plan.

1Q. WHAT IS THE POSITION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC) ON KOSOVO?

-- The 2008 Organization of The Islamic Conference Summit in Dakar included the following statement on Kosovo in its communiqué: "The Conference noted the declaration of independence by the Assembly of Kosovo, on February 17, 12008. Recalling the continue interest of the OIC, regarding the Muslims in the Balkans, it expressed its solidarity with the Kosovar People."

-- In the run-up to the Summit, OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu issued a statement immediately following the Kosovo declaration of independence on February 17. The OIC SYG said: "...a very important event took place yesterday. Kosovo has finally declared its independence after a long and determined struggle by its people. As we rejoice this happy result, we declare our solidarity with and support to our brothers and sisters there. The Islamic Umma wishes them success in their new battle awaiting them which is the building of a strong and prosperous state capable of satisfying of its people. There is no doubt that the independence of Kosovo will be an asset to the Muslim world and further enhance the joint Islamic action."

18. (U) POINT OF CONTACT: Daniela Carcani, Kosovo Desk Officer, Office of South Central Europe, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs(+ 1 202-736-7012 or CarcaniD@state.gov).
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